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## ABSTRACT

A study examined the effects of a reader response approach to literature in which literature is viewed as a medium for exploration and the effects of such an approach on a group of young women. Subjects of the study were four female middle school students, with the adult female researcher as participant observer. Books chosen for reading/discussion were "Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry," (Mildred Taylor) and "Lyddie," (Katherine Paterson). Subjects met for 15 sessions to discuss the books' characters and later for further reflection. Analysis was organized as follows: reading as lived-through experience, reading as social encounter, reading as a literary event, conceptions of female characters, women as connected knowers, and the importance of talk. Information was then categorized as: (1) descriptions of the girls as readers/responders; (2) analysis of their patterns in group interactions; and (3) analysis of the issues that arose as a consequence of the social interactions among the participants. Results indicated that problems were encountered, including talking about others in negative ways, inappropriate language, and hurtful comments. These should be addressed in the classroom by keeping channels of communication open, including students in decisions about conversations, and taking an open look at power and privileges. Findings revealed that life experience mediates responses to literature and books evoke strong emotional responses and provide means for cognitive and emotional growth. Re-imagining literature and re-imagining teachers' roles can be an exploration leading to significant work in understanding. (Contains 16 references.) (CR)

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## Responses of Four Adolescent Females to Adolescent Fiction with Strong Female Characters

### Objectives

In 1993 I undertook a study with four adolescent females in order to investigate two areas: first, the effects of a reader response approach to literature in which literature is viewed as a medium for exploration; and second, the effects of a such an approach on a group consisting of all women: an adult researcher and four adolescent students. Through the investigations I hoped to learn more about the following:

- 1) how these adolescent girls would respond to the strong female characters, including those characters' utterances, actions, and interactions with other characters;
- 2) how they would speak to each other and to an adult woman about their responses;
- 3) the ways in which my identity as a former teacher and an adult woman and my own experiences would mediate in my responses to the books, the girls, and the context of informal discussion;
- 4) how the social interactions of the book talks would play themselves out over time;
- 5) how talk works to create the transactions; and
- 6) what the possibilities are for transactions to lead to transformations.

## Theoretical Framework

The study was based on Louise Rosenblatt's reader response theory (1938/83) coupled with research on how women negotiate their identities as knowers (Belenky, et. al, 1986; Brown and Gilligan, 1992). Rosenblatt's meanings are clear: literature, when offered to the reader as a potentially meaningful transaction, can be transformative, if the teacher views literature as "human construction" (Wilson, 1991) and sees the readers as located in varying discourses because what the reader brings to the classroom affects how she will connect with the literature. Therefore, in any given classroom, though each reader may be reading the same text, what they have in common is the shared set of symbols on the page. What they bring to interpret those symbols is different.

Students usually respond inwardly, if not outwardly, to literature that resonates with their own experiences. When a student's responses and understandings are validated in the classroom, literature has the potential to become a medium for exploration, including self-expression and self-examination, and results in understanding of self and others and a positive shaping of identities as knowers. "Fundamentally, the goal is the development of individuals who will function less as automatic bundles of habits and more as flexible, discriminating personalities" (Rosenblatt, 1938/83, p. 106).

## Method

### The Participants

In the study I worked with four girls from a community middle school, meeting two of them, Micki Stanton-Myers and Leah Corbin, during a project in which I

interviewed both of them and found them to be eager participants. However, I was concerned about some of the characteristics that matched mine at their age--we were white, middle-class, avid readers. My concern was that we would lack breadth in our perspectives and therefore in our discussions. A colleague mentioned that Hope Dunlap, a middle-school girl whom she had interviewed for her study (Smith, 1993), seemed to be a willing participant and might make a good candidate.<sup>3</sup> Hope, unlike Micki and Leah, who were relative newcomers to the school, had been there since pre-school. Hope was not an avid reader, did not succeed in school as well as Micki and Leah did, and was not from a privileged background. Hope seemed quite enthused about participating when invited.

So the study began with Micki, Leah, and Hope, and during the first two weeks we met on four occasions to talk about *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. On the first meeting day, I arrived to find the girls waiting for me at the top of the stairs leading to our room. With them was a tall, shy-looking girl who appeared reluctant to bid her friends good-bye. The girls told me she was Hope's friend, Natalie Tomlinson, and when I asked if she liked to read, Hope replied, "Nah, she isn't into reading, she's into horses" (March 23, 1993: p.1). I was anxious for Hope to be happy in the group, and thought that including a friend for her would be a counterbalance for Micki and Leah's close relationship. Natalie was willing, and joined the group on April 5, 1993. She was usually quiet, but when asked, would provide thoughtful responses. At fourteen, she was the oldest of the group.

An important focus in the methodology was my own positioning as participant observer. I came to the study with great personal interest in and experiences with the

topic of responses to literature, both as a student and as a teacher. As such, I was a "positioned subject...observ[ing] with a particular angle of vision" (Rosaldo, 1989: p. 19). Not that there was only one angle: I came situated as a former teacher, struggling in a shift from didacticism and positivism to constructivism; I came situated as a woman, recalling my days as an adolescent girl moving, as Mike Rose (1988) did, through school and through life in a kind of somnambulance, interrogating neither my romantic notions from society about what constitutes a happy life for women nor my voluminous readings throughout my school life. Though my memories of reading are many, there are few times that I remember discussing books with anyone. The little reflecting that I did do was in my head, but usually I simply went from book to book, not stopping to contemplate or to make decisions concerning where the new reading fit into my existing notions. Neither did I stop to argue or to "resist" (Fetterly, 1978) the information I absorbed. Not too many people do at that age on their own, however; and the impress of ideas that finds no place for expression often finds itself buried or passed over along with the rest of the assumptions that drive our actions without our really knowing why.

Recalling my days as a student in the literature classroom, I think it is safe to say I would have welcomed an approach that helped my classmates and me learn about ourselves and life through an engagement with language, that helped me understand that the opinions that we had mattered and were valid. I would have welcomed an approach that took advantage of my love for reading and writing. Instead, my cognitive powers remained unchallenged, my literary understandings remained stunted, my literary taste, immature. But worst of all, as a female student, I was cheated of the

opportunity to identify and examine assumptions about women, men, and our roles in life, assumptions that remained unidentified and unchallenged until much later. Instead, I read on, and what I chose and discussed (with no one except a friend who was much like me) reinforced a romantic vision of life that was to stay with me for years to come. It was then, as teacher, researcher, reader, woman, and girl that I came to the study, with questions and hopes and theory. (Tierney, 1994)

### The Books

Although the girls and I talked incidentally about several books during the course of our conversations, we scheduled readings and discussion of two: *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, by Mildred Taylor and *Lyddie*, by Katherine Paterson. *Roll of Thunder* is the story of the Logans, a black family living in the segregated South of the 1930's. It is told through the eyes of Cassie Logan, a nine-year-old who, at the beginning of the book, is uninitiated into the harsher realities of life for the black people of her day. The book is the story of her growing up in those hard times. *Lyddie* is the story of a young adolescent girl of the 1830's who is hired out by her mother to work in a tavern in Vermont. She soon leaves to work in a factory in Lowell, Massachusetts, where the rest of the story takes place. Like *Roll of Thunder*, the story is seen through the eyes of the main character.

### Research Processes

Qualitative research is not a linear, but a recursive process involving fieldwork, on-going analysis, discovery, re-routing of directions, re-framing of research questions, and roadblocks (Ely, et al., 1991; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1990). I undertook an

inquiry process (Wolcott, 1988) with the four adolescent females that proceeded through several phases.

Book Conversations. Between February 23 and June 7, 1993, the girls and I met on fifteen occasions to discuss the characters from *Roll of Thunder* or *Lyddie*. The structure of those conversations was affected by various conditions: the point of the research question in its particular evolution at any given time; the disposition of the girls toward book talk or extraneous talk; and the success of the group in making room for everyone's voices to be heard. In order to explore responses more extensively, several sessions were devoted to a reading and discussion of a typed version of our previous conversations about the characters. An extensive analysis of those and the other conversations is the subject of another work.

Reflective Sessions. Between December 3, 1993, and March 18, 1994, the literature group met to reflect on the conversations from the previous year. There were two stages of the reflective sessions: a two-session critique of the discussions; and four listening sessions in which we listened to portions of our taped conversations, reading the transcripts at the same time.

For the reflective sessions I had selected segments from the transcripts that I believed would lend themselves to fruitful analysis: the early sessions when the girls gave vehement responses to Cassie, Stacey, and TJ from *Roll of Thunder*, would, I hoped, confirm or disconfirm some of my early analyses; and I chose sections from *Lyddie* that would allow me to explore reasons for some of the judgments the girls had given concerning the behavior of Lyddie, Charlie, Luke, and Diana from Paterson's *Lyddie*.

Further fieldwork. As necessary I went back to the field to conduct interviews with the teachers and parents of each girl, individual interviews with the girls, and observations of the girls in their classrooms.

Analysis. Following Ely et al.'s (1991) model of developing overarching thinking units, I considered six as a way of organizing my analysis: reading as lived-through experience, reading as a social encounter, reading as a literary event, conceptions of female characters, women as connected knowers, and the importance of talk. I then categorized the information in the following ways:

1. descriptions of the girls as readers and responders, particularly focusing on the ways in which their individual experiences and ways of reading mediate in their interpretations;
2. analysis of their patterns in the group interactions; and
3. analysis of the issues that arose as a consequence of the social interactions among the five of us.

#### Interpretations

Through analysis and reflection, I was able to learn a great deal about each of the girls---their reading processes, themes that recurred in their conversations, their patterns of communication within the group. In addition, I considered the theoretical, pedagogical and personal implications of those discoveries. What I will discuss here, however, is some of what I am left to consider after reflecting on our group interactions.

We had instances of real talk in our group discussions, and we had many times when I believe real talk was just out of reach because we had not yet worked out some

of the difficulties that stood in the way. Analyzing our group conversations showed me the kinds of issues that must be considered if we are to have genuine conversations. When the students are invited and encouraged to offer their responses, and when those responses are accepted, they begin to drop their guard and talk more freely. The kinds of conversations that ensue are at once highly valuable and problematic. These conversations include revelations of student attitudes and values, offering an opportunity for discovery, reflection, and examination; and they include statements that reveal students' needs for strategies that will assist them in reading. Both the affective and academic revelations are usually deemed positive. However, what is not always considered in such a positive light is what may be considered a natural consequence of informal discussions and are what became a challenge for our group: rash statements, thoughtless comments that have the potential to hurt other people, words and phrases hitherto not deemed acceptable in schools, and arguments caused by differences of opinion about issues of importance to the students. In addition we struggled against the power of persons, both present and absent, whose language and actions represent what is acceptable style and even response. Here I speak of teacher expectations, the style of the more fluent girls in the group, and the boys in the class, who, though not present with us, nevertheless figured prominently when <sup>our</sup> ~~are~~ conversations became metacommunication.

Talking About Others in a Negative Way. From time to time the girls complained about something one of the teachers had done or made some other generally negative comment. My immediate instinct was to defend the teachers in some way, or at least offer an explanation, and sometimes I found myself doing so. Aside from the

issue of not wanting to be seen encouraging the girls to "disrespect elders," there was the issue of allowing them to talk about someone who was not there to defend herself. There were occasions when they complained about other students who were not present to defend themselves either. Did that mean that they should not have been allowed to say the things they did, for instance, about classmate Pauline Woods, who according to Hope, talks about everybody behind their backs and is not trustworthy?

"Inappropriate Language." The girls used the words "pissed off" once-in-a-while, fairly normal language in some middle schools, unacceptable in others. and the words were not heinous, but in other circumstances, "inappropriate language" is not a small matter, so this is an issue to be reckoned with.

Words That Hurt. As Leah became more and more comfortable speaking her own voice, she made some hurtful comments, such as the instance when she spoke derogatorily about "skating rink people," in front of Hope, who loves to go to the skating rink. On other occasions she made comments that reflected negatively on Micki's dad, a middle school teacher, and although the rest spoke once-in-a-while about another teacher (not often), the fact that this remark was about Micki's dad made it an awkward, if not hurtful moment.

Privileging One Language. "Whose language is privileged?" was an issue that came up indirectly. When the girls discussed *Lyddie*, their language was what is considered feminine: emphasizing personal connections (Belenky et al, 1986). Of Charlie's betrayal, Leah said, "I'd feel a lot better if he'd have said good-bye, or given her a hug...." Of Charlie himself Natalie said, "Gosh, he's so smart I can hardly describe him. And he loves Lyddie so much." From what the girls said about the

describe him. And he loves Lyddie so much." From what the girls said about the attitudes of the boys, I am not sure they would have felt free to express those things in front of them, or perhaps even *feel* them. Along those same lines, I believe that Hope's confidence in speaking was made more difficult because everyone else was quite fluid in speech. (Although each of us was horrified on first viewing her own speech in print, we did not notice those things while conversing.) And because Hope mixed up details, it was sometimes easier for others to feel "smarter," not intentionally, but smarter nevertheless.

The above issues presenting varying amounts of difficulty in our small group would, I believe, be magnified in a classroom setting; some issues may seem unimportant but, left ignored, can become hot buttons or can prevent dialogue. They are issues that must be addressed if we are to make room for real talk in the classroom. I believe they indicate a need for the following: keeping channels of communication open; finding a way to include students in decisions about conversations, including an open look at power and privilege; a re-imagining of our role of literature; and a re-imagining of our roles as teachers.

Keeping Channels of Communication Open. In order to keep communicating with students, we will have to find ways to discuss the "uncomfortable." The uncomfortable shows up in many discussions in schools, varies across individuals, and as sure as it found its way into our group, so it would in the classroom setting. Sometimes the solution may be a simple matter: getting used to talking to one another, getting to know one another, realizing that students may not be half as uncomfortable as we are. But often it isn't that simple. For example, I understood some things about

myself only as I analyzed and reflected. We don't have time for that extensive a look in the classroom, but we can find ways to hear and see ourselves. Taping and transcribing a conversation isn't practical, but taping and listening is more so, and then talking about what went on. Taking brief notes of student comments about characters and typing them up as a text to which we responded gave us several fruitful sessions.

Concerning issues such as talking about other teachers and classmates or using "inappropriate" language, we will have to discover where to draw our own lines. But if we do not find ways to keep communication open, we may send any one of a variety of unintended signals to the students: their thoughts aren't "right," which translates too often to "worth speaking"; they cannot be trusted to handle serious conversations; or that we are unable to deal with the issues that are important to them, and cannot help. It is obvious from May 17 that I made mistakes, but in spite of them, the girls' responses to the discussions were overwhelmingly favorable. They still liked being able to talk, no matter how many mistakes we all made. On a questionnaire asking them to evaluate the discussion groups they expressed themselves in terms of freedom and lack of stress:

*I liked it better because you could say what you really felt. (Micki)*

*What I value most about this discussion is that you can say anything without it getting back (confadintual) and you don't have to worry about anybody saying anything or getting mad or frustrated. (Hope)*

*...[T]hey are very relaxing and help me think about things in life differently. (Natalie)*

*I always felt like I could be myself without feeling ambarrassed.... (Leah)*

Including Students in Decisions About Conversations. First, we need to know what the problems are in conversations *according to the students* as well as the teacher---perspectives. Perhaps the best conversations are the ones that take the shape of the class, but not even the best teachers know what that shape is without the participation of the class. If the class is able to recognize problems when they arise and work out solutions, they may be able to see their importance in the community while learning the messy practice of democratic conversation.

Taking An Open Look At Power and Privilege. According to Mary Ann, the middle school language arts teacher, the boys at CS Middle School outnumber the girls and usually have over the years, a phenomenon the faculty has sought to understand. In addition, they are "leaders" -- sure of themselves, persistent, and louder (Interview, May 30, 1994). Their absence was one of the major contributing factors to the freedom of expression each girl experienced in our group. However, the girls did not want to be isolated from the boys -- "It would be boring without them," Micki said. Her comment seemed to represent the opinions of the other girls, judging from their remarks on other occasions. What they did not like, and what can and should be addressed, not just with them, but with students in other schools is the way the girls feel embarrassed by them, and sometimes, sexually harassed. Bringing "Nancy Drew" and "Agatha Christie" books to school elicits the comment, "Ooooo, sex novels!" When Natalie and I were discussing the factor of the boys, I pointed out the day (April 5, 1993) that Allen was in the art room when we were talking. She said that his presence didn't bother her because he "didn't have all of his obnoxious friends there to make fun of me" (Interview, June 22, 1994). Hope and Micki were certain the

boys would not want to talk about romance the way we did, and their "dirty minds," and "fine humiliating power" make it difficult for the girls to want to carry on discussions in their presence. The boys are not the only ones with "dirty minds," one girl told me, and the relationships between the sexes are positive overall; but the experience of the girls points to the fact that students need to be assisted in learning how words affect people and how those in positions of power, even slight power, speak words that have a more powerful effect .

Re-imagining Literature. Louise Rosenblatt's conceptions of a reader response approach to literature provided the primary theoretical underpinnings in this study. Over fifty years ago, she re-imagined literature, envisioning it as a "potent force" (1938: p. 276) in the life of the reader. In this study I saw the force of the literature the girls and I read together demonstrated in the way the books evoked strong emotional responses and provided the means for cognitive and emotional growth.

Rosenblatt's view of the act of reading as a transaction necessarily included the reader's life. In this study I saw how my life and the lives of the girls, often unbeknownst to us, mediated in our individual and collective responses to literature. I also saw how the confluence of the books, the setting, the girls' lives, and mine moved us beyond where we were when we began.

Rosenblatt's metaphor of literature as exploration is one I sought to apply practically in my work with the girls. Exploration leads to understanding and validation of the readers' knowings through the expression, pursuit, examination, and evaluation of one's own ideas. Through a valuing of the girls' responses I have learned many things about the literature, the girls, and myself; many of those lessons have made

their way into my reflective writings about the experiences. What I also have come to understand is that a practical application of reader response theory, and thus a re-imagining of literature, must take into account the following questions for further research:

1. How can we give attention to the "missing language arts": talking and listening, and the question of bringing them "into balance" (Belenky, et al., 1986: p. 144)?
2. Part of re-imagining must be a consideration of the kinds of books that will make connections with students. In the process the following questions arise: What kinds of methods can be developed that will work with students of varying ages, abilities, and preferences? How can teachers be a resource for creating positive matches between books and kids, i.e., among the millions of books and hundreds of kids we encounter, how can we read enough and learn enough to be helpful? How, in the matching of books and kids, will we address the issue of censorship when it arises?
3. What can we do regarding our responsibility to assess student learning?

Re-Imagining Our Roles as Teachers. "'The sense' of a word is 'the sum of all the psychological events aroused in our consciousness by the word'" (Vygotsky in Rosenblatt, *Writing*, 1988: p. 9). For most of us who are teachers, the "psychological events" surrounding the word "teacher" include our memories of how we were taught and how we were expected to conduct ourselves in school. Those memories exert a powerful influence over us, in many ways because we did well through that system, so much so that we wanted to be some part of it. Psychological events are also constructed out of words like "accountability" and "responsibility" and become part of our conceptions of "teacher." Add to that the psychological event that standardized

testing evokes in the teacher as she finds herself being judged as well as the students. Then when she wants to try something different there is the psychological event that starting over signifies: being new, being uncertain, living with dilemmas again even after she's been teaching for years. All of those single events and more add up until we have one massive, nearly inviolable psychological event called "teacher" that successfully keeps itself from being re-imagined.

Re-imagining is only the beginning of change, and there are many changes to make. The most notable shift may be in the view of teacher as "the one with the goods," and the job of the teacher to transmit those goods to the students. Reference requests for teaching applicants always include a section on "knowledge of subject matter," and naturally, the teacher has studied for her particular field and so should have plenty of "goods" available. We're irresponsible and I believe uncaring if we do not. However, what my responsibility is with regard to the dispensing of goods is another matter. As a teacher I have become used to providing answers, providing closure. Part of the reason is the notion that doing so demonstrates my knowledge, thus, my right to teach. Plus there is something disturbing about leaving what I might consider an untruth, half-truth, mistaken notion, incomplete idea hanging out in the air without a rebuttal. My silence could imply that I support it. Changing patterns of thinking that underlie such practices is challenging, but necessary work.

Belenky et al. (1986) provide a fitting metaphor in their picture of teacher as midwife: "Midwife-teachers help students deliver their words to the world, and use their own knowledge to put the students into conversation with other voices -- past and present -- in the culture (p. 219).<sup>5</sup> I must have knowledge -- of literature, of life, of my

students, of the events that impact our existence -- because that's what I use to put them in connection with others who will help them learn, grow, and "deliver their words to the world."

Part of re-imagining the role of the teacher is learning to live with uncertainty. There is uncertainty in an approach that is predicated on student needs and interests; and most of us who are teachers and administrators do not do well with uncertainty, probably because it signifies unpreparedness, lack of knowledge.

Another task of re-imagining the role of the teacher is to take a look at how much being part of an institution causes us to behave in ways that are not good for kids. We have sharp divisions between what's okay at home, but not in school, things such as "having fun," but the fact that school is not fun is at the heart of the problem of waste. I hasten to define "fun," however, because using the word calls up images of irresponsibility and frivolity that I do not mean to imply. Leah used the word in the way that I mean it when she wrote an evaluation of the sessions: *I absolutely loved discussing [Lyddie], because it was a great book and it was fun to discuss it.* Leah, almost by nature a model student, was the most conscientious of the group in preparation for group time, and she was not one to get so silly that she lost control. But she described the talks as "fun," which means there was some element of excitement and some element of meaning present. Natalie described the talks as "relaxing" which, in her difficult and stressful circumstances, is a victory. Sometimes we were downright zany, which Hope enjoyed: *This is more fun and we can talk about the book more and be silly at the same time.* However, "silly" did not characterize our discussions -- nor do I think it should -- but neither should it be taboo.

Sometimes "fun" means free, which was easier to be in the small group. On December 10, when as a group we took a look back at the experience, Micki made the following comments that speak to the desire for "fun" but speak also to other challenges in translating our work to the classroom:

Micki: I really like it because in a smaller group, I mean, it was easier for us to talk more. And we could still be goofy and we could get, I mean, we could get stuff done. I mean in a big group if you're goofy you don't get stuff done, but if you're in a little group you can goof off and still get stuff done.

Leah: Yeah.

Kathleen: Because why. Does the goofiness slow down the whole process or something?

Micki: No. When you have a big group, if you have one person goofy, the whole class gets goofy. Then then there are so many people being goofy---

Kathleen: that you lose the---

Micki: that it's really hard.

Kathleen. You do.... Do you lose the train of thought or what happens?

Micki: You just don't get really anything done because the teacher yells and then you quiet down. Then they give a lecture for the next half-hour. (pp. 4-5)

"Without playing, conversing, listening to others, and drawing out their own voice, people fail to develop a sense that they can talk and think things through.

(Belenky, et al., p. 33). The *institution* of schooling, both public and private, with its structures and rules, many of them necessary, but many of them saying "We can't live like we normally would; we're in school" often robs us of the time and means to "play, converse, listen to others, and draw out their voice." It prevents us from doing "good work" (Kincheloe, 1991). Perhaps we can think of ways to make the institution of schooling less of a system and more of an organism. Perhaps we can find ways to de-institutionalize ourselves.

The work is significant for teachers of adolescent girls because it addresses some of the behaviors that put women in schools at a disadvantage at a time when they could be forging strong identities as knowers (AAUW Reports, 1991, 1992; Belenky, et. al, 1986; Brown and Gilligan, 1992; Orenstein, 1994; Sadker and Sadker, 1994). Those of us who are English/language arts teachers can learn how to increase girls' participation in schools, and ultimately in their adult lives by encouraging and validating their honest responses to literature.

The work is significant for teachers of adolescent boys, boys who must examine the ways they, too, are affected by societal norms for males and females, and how they affect, for good and for ill, both themselves and female members of their society.

The work is significant for those of us who teach in higher education. "Women students need opportunities to watch women professors solve (and fail to solve problems and male professors fail to solve (and succeed in solving problems). They need models of thinking as a human, imperfect, and attainable activity" (Belenky, p. 217). For teachers: do we use our "authority and power to make it easier for girls' and women's voices to be heard and engaged openly in relationship---to encourage the

open trouble of political resistance, the insistence on knowing what one knows and the willingness to be outspoken, rather than to collude in the silencing and avoidance of conflict that fosters the corrosive suffering of psychological resistance: the reluctance to know what one knows and the fear that one's experience, if spoken, will endanger relationships and threaten survival" (Belenky, et al, p. 41).

For me part of my work with the girls then and with my students now is coming to terms with my own place as a woman, as a person. For many of us it is necessary to reclaim, not just the girls lost voices, but our own, from the juncture where many of us left them back at the crossroads of our childhood and adolescence, or further back, back in a time before our own mothers and fathers, whose own ways of living did not permit us to claim our voices at all and where the itinerary was already mapped out.

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